

# Frequently Asked Questions

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### Contributions

[How can one contribute to BLESS USA?](#)



There are several ways one can contribute to BLESS USA:

1. Sending a check or money order to BLESS USA at PO Box 384, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.
2. With a credit card or through a checking/savings account either on-line or by [contacting](#) BLESS USA.
3. Through monthly contributions. Contributors can schedule automatic deductions from their checking accounts or credit cards. This option is available by contacting BLESS USA or [on-line](#).
4. Through a [matching gift](#) program. Did you know that your employer may match your contribution to BLESS USA? There are over 3,600 companies that match their employees' contributions to organizations like BLESS USA. To obtain this list, please contact BLESS USA or search for your company on-line to see if your employer participates in this program.

[Is there a minimum donation required to participate in a BLESS USA project?](#)



No. BLESS USA welcomes any contribution of any amount. There is no minimum.

[Can we send clothing or equipment rather than money?](#)



Currently BLESS USA only accepts certain items such as wedding dresses and medical supplies and equipment. We do not send clothing to Egypt at this time. Please contact the office for further details, or if you have something specific you would like to donate.

[What percentage of funds raised actually go to Egypt, and what is the percentage of administrative costs?](#)



Administrative costs range from 5% - 7%. Thus, 93% - 95% of contributions go directly to needy Copts in Egypt.

[What is the matching gift program?](#)



Thousands of companies throughout the country match their employees' charitable contributions to organizations like BLESS USA. A database of these companies is available to search on our website. Through this search, you can see whether your company participates in a matching gift program. Please note that the on-line search is sensitive to the exact spelling and spacing of the company's name. If you cannot find your company, contact your human resources/personnel office.

[Has BLESS tried to obtain funds from the US Government or from grantmakers?](#)



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BLESS USA is currently researching options that will enable us to obtain funds from grant-making foundations. If you have any suggestions, please contact BLESS USA.

### [Who handles and supervises the distribution of funds?](#)



Funds are distributed under the leadership of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, along with His Grace Bishop Yolios. Bishop Yolios supervises the staff of BLESS in Egypt who conduct the needs assessment process and subsequent follow-up evaluations. His Holiness Pope Tawadros II personally meets many of the those in need every Thursday in Cairo, and every other Saturday in Alexandria.

### [Is there a report published about where and how the contributions made to BLESS USA are distributed?](#)



A comprehensive report on how funds are allocated is issued and published annually.

### [Is BLESS USA audited by an external auditor?](#)



BLESS USA is audited by an independent external auditor, Leaver Gonzalez & Tabor, LLC.

### [Does BLESS USA file a 990?](#)



BLESS USA files a 990. It is available online at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

### [How is money sent to Egypt?](#)



Funds are transmitted to Egypt through a secured bank account on a regular basis.

### [Do any of the funds sent go to the building of churches in Egypt?](#)



No. All of the funds BLESS USA sends to Egypt are used exclusively for distribution to people who are in need.

### [How does a person in Egypt become eligible for assistance from BLESS?](#)



A person who is in need first seeks aid from the priest in his/her church. If their parish is unable to meet all of their needs, then that person, along with the priest, will seek help from the bishop of their diocese.

In the event that their need exceeds what the diocese is able to provide, the bishopric will supply them with a letter stating their circumstances, which the individual along with the priest, take to BLESS for assessment and processing.

### [How does BLESS assess the need of individuals qualifying for assistance?](#)



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The BLESS team in Egypt, led by His Grace Bishop Yolios, keeps comprehensive track of individuals who receive funds from BLESS USA. BLESS extensively investigates and verifies every case it receives for aid. A careful and thorough evaluation method is used to identify individuals in need and assess their situation:

1. Assessment - His Grace Bishop Yolios, along with the BLESS Egypt team, meets with individuals who will receive funds from BLESS USA to determine legitimacy and need.
2. Distribution - funds are then distributed based on need.
3. Follow-up - individuals who receive funds are monitored in order to ensure that the funds provided are used for the purpose intended.
4. Reassessment and update - His Grace Bishop Yolios and the BLESS Egypt team work diligently to ascertain whether the situations of individuals receiving funds from BLESS USA are deteriorating or improving. Records are then updated.
5. Redistribution – funds may be redistributed according to the reassessment of the situation.

### [Are my contributions tax-deductible?](#)



Yes, all contributions are tax-deductible.

### [How are receipts of contributions handled for IRS tax-filing purposes?](#)



In January, following the close of the fiscal year, BLESS USA sends a summary contribution statement to every contributor, according to IRS regulations. This statement is used as a receipt for tax-exemption purposes.

### [Are any of the funds that BLESS USA collects taxable in the United States or Egypt?](#)



BLESS USA is a tax-exempt organization in the U.S. pursuant IRC 501(c)3. The funds sent to Egypt are not taxed by the Egyptian government.

## Organization

### [How does BLESS USA differ from other Coptic relief organizations in America?](#)



BLESS USA is an official nonprofit charity organization of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United States. It serves Coptic Christians with various needs in different areas of Egypt. The Board of Directors is chaired by His Holiness

Pope Tawadros II.

### [How is BLESS USA staffed?](#)



BLESS USA is staffed entirely by volunteers.

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### [Does BLESS USA have office hours?](#)



Yes, currently the office hours are Monday-Thursday from 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM. Messages are retrieved and returned in a timely manner.

### [What is the affiliation between BLESS Egypt and BLESS USA?](#)



BLESS USA is a charity organization that funds the social service activities of BLESS Egypt. BLESS (Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services) is a private non-profit organization headquartered in Cairo, Egypt. While the Bishopric provides ecumenical and development services as well, BLESS USA supports only its social service activities.

### [What happens when I join the BLESS USA mailing list?](#)



You will receive our monthly newsletter as well as other mailings that will keep you up to date about the situation of the needy in Egypt. One can become a member by [contacting](#) BLESS USA, [registering](#) on-line, or sending a [contribution](#). You can ask to be removed from the mailing list at anytime.

## Programs

### [Why is there an education fund if education in Egypt is free?](#)



Although education in Egypt is free, there are significant private expenses associated with it at every stage of instruction. These include books, supplies and private tutoring that are essential to an adequate education.

### [Can I sponsor a family through the Family Assistance Program?](#)



No. Individual contributions are not designated to a particular family. They are distributed according to the needs of the families in the program.

### [Can a contributor obtain the names and addresses of the people who receive aid?](#)



We do not disclose any personal information about the families served in order to preserve their privacy and dignity.

### [Can one send money to a relative in need or someone they know through BLESS USA?](#)



No. All recipients of aid must first go through the needs assessment process administered by BLESS in Egypt.

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### Statistics

[Where does BLESS USA get the statistics it uses?](#)



The statistics we use have been compiled from current sources such as the United Nations Human Development Report and World Bank Report. These groups work to assist the needy in many countries around the world. You can view the UN Human Development report in its entirety by following the link below.

<http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/EGY.html>